



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: May 19, 2020.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:37 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation.

Minutes.

Members in Attendance: Daniel Amstutz, Aravind Basavapathruni, Ky Bertoli, Wayne Chouinard, Lenard Diggins, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, Laura Swan.

Members Missing: Chuck Giroux, Corey Rateau.

Members of Public in Attendance: Kristin Pennarun, Brian Ristuccia, Steve Revilak, Jim Doherty, Charles Hartshorne, Todd Radford, Bob Sprague, Anne Dinoto, Marc Colosimo, Jo Anne Preston, Leah Broder, Angela Mara Vatz, Marais Young, Steven Wofsy, Leah Broder.

1. Administration.

The Chair (Howard Muise) read the script for remotely conducted meetings, referred the members to the agenda attachment entitled “Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law”, and announced that the meeting was being recorded. The minutes of the January 8, 2020 meeting and the February 12, 2020 were each approved by roll call vote. The Chair also directed everyone’s attention to the correspondence from the Select Board regarding a request for Medford St/Chestnut St Traffic Calming. The Chair asked TAC members to review the project status list and let him know of any updates or corrections.

2. Public Comments.

The only public comments provided were during the discussion of particular agenda items.

3. Medford Street/Chestnut Street Traffic Calming

Muise clarified that based on discussion with the Town Manager and Jo Ann Preston, who sent the request to the Select Board, TAC should consider traffic calming for the entire length of Chestnut St. between Mystic St. and Medford St. Jo Anne Preston asked to explain her

request regarding Medford St./Chestnut St. traffic calming. Because she needed to leave for another meeting, item 7 on the agenda was moved forward. Preston explained that there are a number of senior citizens in Chestnut Manor and a nearby condo complex on the north side of Chestnut St. who must cross the street to get to stores, the library, church, and Town Hall. She described crossing Chestnut St. as dangerous and cited the death of a senior citizen who was killed on December 31, 2019 crossing Chestnut St. near Mystic St.

Laube asked if TAC had studied Chestnut St. previously. Muise indicated that it had not to his knowledge but did point out that TAC had installed pedestrian flags at the crosswalk between the church and funeral home. Chouinard indicated there was an early request from Jo Anne for a 3-D crosswalk. He does not favor 3-D crosswalks and prefers to paint standard crosswalks. He also suggested removing the existing crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. because of its location close to Mystic St. He will send everyone material he has been considering for this area. Amstutz indicated there is a problem with the three-phase pedestrian signal crossing at Mystic St.

4. Town Issues/Activities (not already on agenda).

Wayne Chouinard provided updates from the Department of Public Works:

- a. The installation of the new signals at Lake St., and the Bikeway and Brooks Ave. has been accelerated because the schools are closed for the COVID-19 virus. The foundations for the signals have been installed.
- b. The Arlington Center Sidewalk project contract has been awarded. In the meantime, the Town is refurbishing the lighting.

Daniel Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development:

- a. Dan has been preparing the shared streets project on Brooks Ave. It will be installed tomorrow for a test period of one week.

5. Discussion: Thompson School Traffic Calming.

Laura described how Leah Broder had approached her with concerns about access to the park next to Thompson School. It will be rebuilt this summer and that presents a good opportunity to reconsider pedestrian access to the park and traffic circulation. The Wellesley Road One-way study was combined with the North Union St. at Norcross St. study

because they both involve traffic conditions around Thompson School.

Leah Broder made a presentation explaining her request for a study of traffic calming in the area of the school. She listed a number of safety concerns, including lack of traffic calming in school/playground zones, primary pedestrian intersections lack crosswalks and STOP signs, speeding, sight lines obstructed by parked cars, double parking, and school drop-off and pick-up are chaotic and dangerous.

The presentation included a map of the area showing existing traffic calming. Chouinard noted there were some existing items missing from the map, such as the speed radar sign on the southbound side of North Union St. There was discussion of the playground entrance very close to the school entrance on North Union St. and how the crosswalk is located. Broder expressed concern about no crosswalk and curb ramp at the playground entrance on Everett St. Broder also indicated a number of locations at intersections where there were no crosswalks. Chouinard clarified that many of those locations had curb ramps which indicated a crosswalk even if it wasn't marked. The working group for this study was identified as Swan, Smith, Basavapathruni, Amstutz and Chouinard. Muise invited comments and questions from the public. Comments included assuring coordination with Safe Routes to School and the Thompson School, considering the impact of snow banks, no curb cut at park entrance on Everett, and parking on both sides reduce it to one travel lane.

Smith provided an update on the Wellesley Rd. one-way request. A notice of the March meeting was sent to the residents so they could attend the discussion of what might be done. The meeting was cancelled at the last minute because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Muise indicated that there was no intention of taking a vote at this time.

6. Discussion: Massachusetts Avenue at Appleton Street.

This discussion was prompted by the recent fatal crash at the Mass Ave and Appleton St intersection. Two people riding bicycles traveling eastbound were struck by the driver of a left-turning vehicle. One of the bicyclists was killed and the other was injured. Considerable concern about safety at the intersection has been expressed by residents and bicyclists. Initial discussion was focused on a 2012 study of the intersection that recommended various potential improvements. It appears no action was taken at the time because of the cost involved, which was \$2,000,000 for the most expensive alternative. Amstutz indicated MassDOT has recorded 11 crashes at this location since 2016, including the recent crash. Ten of those were vehicle crashes. Maxtutis stated he thought the intersection was geometrically challenged and

awkward: it is difficult to make left turns from Appleton St. and Appleton Pl (including a difficult weave between the two moves), alignment is bad, Mass Ave speeds are high, and sight lines are bad.

Muise solicited comments from the public. One person indicated that her family witnessed the crash, confirming their long-time fears about the intersection. She added that pedestrian crossings are especially difficult because drivers seem to be confused about how the pedestrian crossings work. At Chouinard's request she indicated it was around 6:30 pm and the weather was clear with no solar glare. In response to a question from Chouinard, Amstutz indicated the intersection was not on the complete streets list and thus it was not likely the Town could receive funding through the state Complete Streets program in the near future to address issues at this intersection.

Another person indicated he had two incidents at this location when he was traveling eastbound and had a minor crash and a near miss with westbound cars turning left. He had a video of one incident that showed a truck passing him and blocking his view of the vehicle waiting to turn left. Another speaker indicated that because of the road curving right at the intersection, eastbound bikes have restricted views of the intersection. He indicated that stopped buses also interfere with visibility of the traffic signal and expressed concern about the proposed hotel on traffic flow.

Chouinard indicated there may be few if any low-cost fixes possible in response to a question from one speaker. Amstutz suggested that additional pavement markings might clarify the areas which cars should move. Smith invited the public to the ABAC meeting the following evening and said for people who can't join it, he would forward their concerns. The next speaker suggested configuring the intersection to make left-turners make more of a right-angle turn to reduce the speed of turners. Diggins suggested a warning sign on the eastbound approach directed particularly at bicyclists. Another speaker pointed out that vehicles approaching from Appleton St. often block the crosswalk along Mass Ave.

Chouinard asked if the TAC should establish a working group to study the intersection. Muise indicated he was reluctant to do this until TAC knows more about how the Town wishes to proceed. The Select Board has not referred the matter to TAC because the crash only happened two weeks ago.

The Chair suggested there was little to report on the remaining items and, given the time, adjourned the meeting at 9:37 PM.